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ABSTRACT

In an effort to provide statistical support for more stringent attendance policies, a study was conducted at McCook Community College (MCC) to determine whether there was a significant relationship between absences and grades in freshman composition classes. A literature review of similar studies conducted at both the secondary and postsecondary levels found some evidence of a negative relationship between classroom absenteeism and academic performance. Data were drawn from the grade and attendance books of one instructor for three English 101 sections taught during fall semesters 1987, 1988, and 1989. Final semester percentage grades were calculated for those who missed class from one to three times and for students who missed class from four to seven times. Students who had no absences or more than seven absences were excluded. The major conclusion derived from the study was that an MCC composition student who was absent from class one to three times would receive a final semester percentage grade that was significantly higher than a student who missed from four to seven classes. Based on study findings, it was recommended that faculty take regular attendance and reduce grades for more than three absences. (JMC)

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABSENCES AND GRADES AT McCOOK COLLEGE

Applied Educational Research and Evaluation Seminar

by

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JC 900 481

A Practicum Report Presented to Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University

October, 1990

Abstract of a Practicum Report Presented to Nova University
in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education

A STUDY TO DETERMINE IF THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABSENCES AND GRADES AT McCOOK COLLEGE

by

Ford M. Craig

October, 1990

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a relationship between absences and grades in freshman composition classes at McCook Community College. The problem which prompted this study was that English instructors' attendance policies were punitive and based upon a conclusion that had not been statistically validated. Thus, the research question concerned whether the average MCC composition student who "cut" class one to three times per semester received a final semester percentage grade which was significantly higher than a student who "cut" class four to seven times.

Procedures involved extracting data from the grade and attendance book of one instructor for three English 101 sections taught fall semesters 1987, 1988, and 1989. Data was divided into two groups: 1) final semester percentage grades for those who missed class from one to three times and 2) final semester percentage grades for students who

missed from four to seven times. Through a careful process of random selection, a sample of thirty-six grades for each category was extracted. Arithmetic means were determined for each group, and these figures were subjected to a one-tailed z test at the .05 confidence level.

The result of the z test was a determination of the z value to be 3.40. Since this calculated value of z was greater than the critical value, 1.65, it was possible to reject the null hypothesis.

The major conclusion derived from the results was that a significant difference existed in the arithmetic means of the two samples. The significance of the difference was established through the z test.

Recommendations included that the practicum be distributed to English department members and that students be notified of the findings. It was also recommended that English department members use the conclusion of the study to review and update their attendance policies. A final recommendation was that additional studies on this topic be completed at the post-secondary level.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background and Significance

At McCook Community College (MCC), a small (450 full-time students) publicly supported Nebraska two-year college, student attendance patterns in freshman composition classes had been an area of concern among faculty members for several years. In an attempt to improve attendance, English Department faculty developed more stringent attendance policies, some of which included deducting points from student's final percentage grades if "excessive" absences occurred.

A problem arose in that the more stringent policies (established as a part of the course syllabus and not in violation of Board policy or state statute) were at least partially based on the deduction that missing a class more than three times was detrimental to the student's grade standing. However, this conclusion had not been statistically supported. Essentially, a question of relationships was involved. Did the average student who missed one to three times receive a final percentage grade significantly higher than a student who missed from four to seven times? The question and the answer were of special importance to some MCC students whose grades were, depending on the English Department faculty member

involved, sometimes being reduced for absences in excess of three. Also, the President of MCC encouraged this study and displayed special interest in the results. Since the study was conducted for the benefit of students and had administrative interest and support, it appeared appropriate and feasible.

The purpose of this practicum, therefore, was to determine if there was a relationship between absences and grades in English composition classes at MCC. An extended review of literature was conducted to discover similar research projects and significant findings of those studies. Also, particular attention was given to statistical treatments displayed in the literature examined. "Academic achievement," "attendance," "community colleges," "predictor variables," "two-year colleges," and "two-year college students" were descriptors used in an ERIC search for relevant periodical articles.

This practicum was related to topics in the Applied Educational Research and Evaluation Seminar. Parametric techniques, introduced in the class and relevant to this study, appeared as well in the Nova Applied Educational Research and Evaluation guide (Barton, 1987). Also, topics involving inferential statistics including predictive uses of the z - test appeared in the guide and were examined in the Seminar. Since the applicable statistical test for predictive purposes in this study was the z test, this

practicum was related to concepts taught in the Seminar and is, therefore, appropriate.

Research Question

The central research question was as follows: "Did the average MCC composition student who missed one to three classes receive a final semester percentage grade that was significantly higher than the student who missed from four to seven times?"

Research Hypothesis

An MCC composition student who is only absent from class one to three times will receive a final semester percentage grade that is significantly higher than a student who misses from four to seven classes.

Null Hypothesis

A MCC composition student who is absent from class one to three times will receive a final semester percentage grade that is not significantly higher (equal to or less) when compared with the student who misses from four to seven classes.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A literature review was conducted to determine the relationship between attendance and grades at other educational institutions. Using different sets of descriptors in three separate ERIC searches, a number of relevant journal articles were isolated. However, the literature available on this topic at the two-year college level was limited, so this review included some references from the secondary school level and some from four-year post-secondary institutions. The literature reviewed was then organized using the classification of educational levels, beginning with secondary, moving to two-year post-secondary, and concluding with four-year post-secondary. Within each of the three levels, chronology (publication date) was used for organizational purposes.

Studies of the relationship between attendance patterns and academic performance were more numerous at the secondary school level. Since community college student populations are, in part, composed of recent high school graduates, discussions of two fairly recent secondary school studies are included here.

In a graduate paper written about student absenteeism at the secondary level, Mervilde (1981:37) comments that

his study "found that absenteeism had an effect on student academic performance." With this relationship in mind, Mervilde (1981:40) explores some of the factors contributing to student absences including peer relationships, ability, age, psychological problems, and after school work. He next discusses measures used by school officials to improve attendance including "punitive and restrictive plans," and "counseling plans" (Mervilde, 1981:40). Near the end of the paper, Mervilde states, "It was also concluded that many of the plans used several different types of approaches to achieve a reduction in student absenteeism" (1981:41).

Chronic absenteeism was a concern at Centennial High School District in Gresham, Oregon. Estcourt (1986) and others formed a committee to study the attendance problem in hopes of finding appropriate solutions. A statement of the committee's concern surfaces in an early paragraph: "Chronic absenteeism, which goes hand-in-hand with poor achievement, presents a problem for high school students because a high school diploma is the minimal requirement in 1986 even for the most unskilled jobs" (Estcourt, 1986:4). While the study the committee conducted was non-statistical, they did review available quantitative research findings: "The Committee next examined available research on the subject of attendance finding that low achievement correlated with chronic absenteeism" (Estcourt, 1986:4). Having completed their efforts, Estcourt, and her

group offer several recommendations, with two being especially noteworthy: 1) counseling services and early intervention can be helpful, and 2) matching appropriate teaching styles with chronic absentee's learning needs sometimes improves the situation.

Both of these studies conducted at the secondary school level reflected agreement on certain points. First, the writers of these studies agree that absenteeism negatively affects academic performance. Second, the writers of both studies mention counseling services or plans as being helpful in dealing with chronic absenteeism.

Two other corrective measures mentioned earlier by these writers were worthy of note. Mervilde (1981), in his study, lists punitive and restrictive measures as having limited usefulness, and Estcourt (1986) urges the matching of teaching styles with chronic absentee's learning needs as being useful in certain instances.

At the two-year college level, an early but significant attendance study was completed by Huff and Opacinch (1972) at Catonsville Community College in Maryland. This study was of particular importance because of the size of the sample examined. Huff and Opacinch (1972:1) describe the sample in this manner:

> The analyses are based upon a sample of individual grades and percentage of attendance as reported on the forms used by faculty. The total grades reported were 9,322 and included 5,525 freshman and 3,792 sophomore grades. This constitutes 56% of the 16,712 grades actually recorded. It is estimated that nearly 90% of the target sample are reflected in this study.

Early in the study, the authors state that "the primary purpose of the study is to investigate the relationship between grade received and attendance during the fall 1971 semester" (Huff and Opacinch, 1972:1). The grades and attendance figures were gathered for several sub-groups including freshman, sophomores, new students, returning students, transfer students, full-time and part-time students (Huff and Opacinch, 1972:1).

Once the data were collected and organized, they were analyzed using the Chi square test to determine whether or not a relationship between grades and attendance patterns existed. Huff and Opacinch (1972:5) describe the results as follows:

> The x^2 values for full-time, part-time, 0-10 credits completed and all freshman are significant beyond the .001 level. There is a significant relationship between grades and level of absences for each of these sub-groups.

In preparing their summary remarks about the findings of their study, these writers carefully note limitations:

> The study does not attempt to establish a cause effect relationship between absence and attendance. It does, however, clearly establish the existence of a strong relationship between attendance and grade awarded for the population as a whole and within each group (Huff and Opacinch, 1972:8).

Holiman (1977) explores the attendance-grade relationship in a study involving students at Chochise Community College. This study, covering the years 1971-1977, concerns attendance patterns of Native American students in developmental education classes. In her

research, Holiman (1977:43) performs a correlation study and finds a low correlation between absences and college grades (.08). Her findings are unusual and run counter to several other studies examined for this review. It is possible situational and behavioral factors contributed to the unusually low correlation. Holiman (1977:43) does conclude with this comment: "The only significant correlation was between a large number of absences (more than 22) and GPA; no student with more than 22 absences completed nine or more units."

In a more recent study at the two-year college level, Self (1984) conducted a related study at Bunker Hill Community College. Her major focus involves an analysis of the impact of learning groups (as opposed to more traditional learning situations) on student absenteeism and academic performance. Using descriptive statistics to report her findings, Self (1984:6) reports that of the forty-eight students in the control group, none had perfect attendance and eighty-four percent had more than three absences. In the experimental group consisting of forty-four students, thirty-nine percent had perfect attendance and fifty-one percent were absent between one and three times (Self, 1984:6). Also, the mean grade point average for the control group was 1.9; while for the experimental group, it was 3.1 (Self, 1984:6).

Several points appeared in Self's study which were worthy of further consideration. First, Self uses the

interval of from one to three absences to denote one of her categories under scrutiny. The other group she mentions is the one that had "more than three absences." These categories were similar to those examined in the present study. Second, Self's efforts concern the impact of teaching methodology upon attendance patterns, a topic which was noted by Estcourt (1986) and noted earlier in this review. Self's findings suggest that, in fact, matching learning needs with teaching styles may very well improve attendance patterns.

In a study conducted within the last two years, McCutcheon (1989) explored absenteeism in a single class as a predictor of future (long term) college performance. The study is a complex one which began in the fall quarter of 1985 with 402 students enrolled in twenty-five social science classes taught by twenty-four professors at Northern Virginia Community College (McCutcheon, 1989:168). At the conclusion of the semester, these students completed a survey on which they estimated their number of absences from class and listed their Social Security number (McCutcheon, 1989:169).

McCutcheon (1989:169) explains the later phases of the study in this manner:

> Three years later an attempt was made to predict academic success using the number of absences from that single social science class in the Fall Quarter of 1985. Approximately half of the original sample could not be traced because of failure to give a social security number. An additional 30 subjects gave social security numbers that could not be found

> on the college's computer. Eighteen others did not take any courses after the Fall Quarter of 1985. Thus the subjects in the present study were 137 students who listed their correct social security number on the Survey and who took at least one course after 1985.

McCutcheon further explains that Pearson product-moment correlations were calculated between the number of absences reported on the Class Attendance Survey in the fall of 1985 and four variables (1989:169). The one relationship tested in the McCutcheon research of particular interest for the current study was the correlation between cumulative GPA and total absences which was -.42 (1989:170). Evidently, McCutcheon believes the -.42 correlation figure is significant for the researcher makes these summary remarks:

> The findings of this study suggest that absenteeism is less situation-specific and more stable over time than it was previously believed to be. . . . Perhaps many chronic absentees are not aware that they may be jeopardizing their grades by failing to attend.

McCutcheon concludes by suggesting more studies of this kind need to be completed at the two-year and four-year college level.

Two studies concerning the relationship between absences and grade performance were identified at the four-year college level. The first of these by Siciliano (1978) explores the absence-grade connection in language classes at Boston College. (At the outset, it should be noted that Siciliano's study method is perhaps best termed "action research" for the article contains no mention of either descriptive or inferential statistical methods).

Nevertheless, Siciliano's conclusions generally are supported by others mentioned in this present document who have completed statistical studies. Thus, after much lengthy discussion, Siciliano (1978:103) states,

> there seemed to be a nexus between attendance and the grade. The "A" or "B" students were rarely absent, if ever; those who sported the lower grades, or who failed were habitual absentees; the greater the number of absences, the lower the grade.

One other relevant observation which Siciliano (1978:103) makes is that "where there is no check, absenteeism is generally a foregone conclusion."

In a second study at California Polytechnic State University, Slem (1983) assesses the relationship between absenteeism and factors such as stress, depression, and academic performance. In his research, Slem (1983:2) defines absenteeism as the number of times a student is not present to hand in assignment or complete tests. Grade performance is reflected in mid-term and final examination scores. Using Spearman's formula for rank correlation as the statistical test, Slem (1983:3) determines that a fairly strong ($r=.42$) negative relationship exists between classroom absenteeism and academic performance; that is, with increases in absences, there is frequently an observed decrease in grades.

Thus, with the exception of one writer, Holiman (1977) the other researchers surveyed in this chapter generally agreed that a relationship existed between attendance and academic performance, and at least some of the time, the

relationship was determined through research methods to be negative or inverse. As absences increased, grades decreased. Also, these findings appeared to be consistent at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

Due to the suspected (and at times) determined relationship between attendance and grades, the researchers, at various points in the literature, offered suggestions for improving attendance, and hence, grades. The following list includes most of those offered:

1. using punitive and restrictive procedures appropriate to the educational level;
2. using counseling services which are appropriate at most levels;
3. matching teaching styles with chronic absentee's learning needs;
4. urging instructional staff to take regular attendance; and
5. informing students about the negative effects excessive absences have upon grade averages.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This study primarily involved the methodology of ex post facto research. It began with an extended search of literature which helped provide a conceptual framework for the practicum. Also, an appropriate statistical treatment was selected.

Once the literature review was completed and the statistical treatment, z test, determined, relevant information was gathered and methodically organized. Points which had been deducted for the fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh absences were added back into the final percentage grades so that the results would not be confounded by their absence. Data were then extracted from the grade and attendance record book of one instructor for three English 101 composition classes taught fall semesters 1987, 1988, and 1989. The data (final semester percentage grades) were categorized into one of two groups for each year and sequentially numbered (one through however many grades there were in the group for that particular year). Included in the first group were final percentage grades from students who missed from one to three times, and in the second group, the final percentage grades of students who missed from four to seven times. Students who had no absences or who had more than seven absences were not

included since these groupings generally represented extremes. (At MCC, students with more than seven absences may be dropped with an "F" by the instructor.)

As mentioned, lists were made for each year consisting of grades from students (no student names were used to protect confidentiality) with from one to three absences and those with from four to seven absences. From each of these numbered lists, a random sample of twelve students was selected. The twelve percentage grades to be selected from each of the six lists were identified through the use of a random number generator on a math and science calculator.

For each grouping of thirty-six percentage grades an arithmetic mean was determined. The z test was used at a confidence level of .05 to determine whether there was a significant difference between the arithmetic means of the two groups being examined. The z test was used because the sample size was greater than thirty.

Results were reported in tabular and narrative format. Findings were reported to students, and the results and recommendations were conveyed to the Chairperson of the Arts and Sciences Division at MCC.

Definition of Terms

As used in this study, the term "absence" meant a class period when the student was gone for reasons other than a college-sanctioned activity, illness, or death in

the family. These class periods were times when students admitted they "cut" class.

Assumptions

There were several assumptions made in conjunction with this study. They were the following:

1. It was assumed that patterns of attendance taking were regular and done with reasonable consistency.
2. Also, it was assumed that judgments were consistent as to whether an absence was for acceptable reasons or was merely a "cut" and therefore, unacceptable.
3. It was assumed that the English classes under study were representative of other English 101 composition classes.
4. It was assumed that the ability levels (reflected in their scores) of students involved in the study could be described as "normally" distributed.
5. It was assumed that a random sample of thirty-six for each category was representative of the population.

Limitations

There were several significant limitations inherent in this study. They were as follows:

1. For the purposes of this practicum, the results were limited to English 101 classes at MCC;

however, it is possible they may find wider applications.

2. There were some students in the one to three absence range who had four or more actual (physically gone) absences but whose grades could not be included in this study because only one, two, or three of the absences were determined to be cuts. The remainder of the absences were for acceptable reasons.
3. In some instances, the instructor was forced to make a subjective decision as to whether or not an absence was to be "excused" based upon the student's explanation of events or situations causing the absences.
4. Ability levels (as reflected in their scores) of the students may not have followed a pattern of normal distribution. The z test, to be reliable, requires parametric data.
5. The English 101 classes under study may not have been representative of other 101 classes. MCC is a small college where students do know or "know about" instructors and do have some ability to adjust their schedules according to perceived preferences.
6. Since there are several causes which influence final grades, a cause - effect relationship between number of absences and final percentage

grades cannot be assumed. The statistical treatment in this study was only used to determine if there was a "significant difference" in the mean scores of the two groups under scrutiny.

7. The independent variable in this study (absences) could not be manipulated as in experimental research.
8. While randomization techniques were used to select the particular students' grades to be tested, the students were not originally randomly assigned to treatment groups as is the case in experimental research.
9. It is difficult to conceive of the many causes which influence a final percentage grade. Thus, many confounding possibilities exist.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

The literature review was completed and organized by educational levels. Related studies involving attendance patterns in secondary schools appeared first, followed by those from two-year colleges, then, by those from four-year colleges and universities. When the literature contained references to statistical tests, they were noted in the review exposition.

As described in the previous chapter, relevant data were extracted from the grade and attendance record book of one instructor for the fall semesters of 1987, 1988, and 1989. For each year, these data were subjected to a random selection process so that twelve grades for each of the two categories under scrutiny were extracted. The percentage grades and the absence intervals for each year appear in Table 1.

The twelve grades which appear in the first column (Fall 1987, 1-3 absences) were randomly drawn from a total of twenty-eight grades. The grades in the second column (Fall 1987, 4-7 absences) were randomly drawn from a total of eighteen. Following the same pattern, those in the third column came from a group of twenty- one, those in column four from a group of twenty, those in column five

from a group of thirty-five, and those in column six from a group of thirteen.

Table 1

Final Semester Percentage Grades for Absence Categories and Years Under Study

	Fall 1987		Fall 1988		Fall 1989	
	Absences		Absences		Absences	
	1-3	4-7	1-3	4-7	1-3	4-7
1.	83%	90%	92%	75%	84%	82%
2.	88%	91%	83%	88%	90%	82%
3.	79%	67%	84%	66%	64%	71%
4.	89%	74%	89%	83%	83%	72%
5.	94%	81%	76%	75%	94%	69%
6.	86%	77%	88%	77%	75%	71%
7.	92%	85%	70%	78%	95%	71%
8.	81%	82%	93%	87%	83%	70%
9.	81%	84%	73%	73%	86%	71%
10.	92%	86%	82%	72%	91%	71%
11.	87%	80%	68%	86%	83%	77%
12.	74%	81%	70%	75%	86%	74%

In order to provide additional data to perform the z test, the arithmetic mean was determined for the thirty-six percentage grades associated with students who were absent from one to three times (the sum of columns 1, 3, and 5 divided by n). The same calculation was then performed for

the thirty-six students who were absent from four to seven times (sum of columns 2, 4, and 6 divided by n).

The arithmetic means thus determined were subjected to a one-tailed z test at a confidence level of .05. According to a table of normal distribution values, the critical value for a one-tailed z test at the .05 confidence level is 1.65 (Isaac and Michael, 1990:227). Therefore, since the calculated value of z (3.40) in the present research was greater than the critical value (1.65), the analysis of the data through testing permits the null hypothesis to be rejected.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The results of this practicum were, indeed, related to the purpose, which was to determine if there was a relationship between number of absences and final semester percentage grades in English composition classes. Through a carefully defined process of extracting data and then subjecting that data to an appropriate statistical treatment, the question of the existence of a relationship between attendance and grades was answered. However, it must be noted that the answer and any conclusions, implications, and recommendations derived from it must be tempered by the assumptions and limitations cited earlier in this document.

The literature review was related to the purpose of this study in at least three ways. First, it was established through the literature review that attendance and absenteeism had been a topic of concern and of study for other researchers. There were several recent studies at both the secondary and two-year post-secondary levels, but attendance and absenteeism did not appear to be of great concern at the four-year post-secondary institutions.

Second, the literature was helpful because it provided some insight with regard to the kinds of statistics used by researchers to determine the relationships under examination in this study. The literature contained references to a variety of different statistical tests. Of the writers reviewed, Huff and Opacinch (1972) used Chi square, Holiman (1977) performed a correlation study, Self (1984) used descriptive statistics, McCutcheon (1989) used the Pearson product-moment correlation, and Slem (1983) tested using Spearman's formula for rank correlation. It was noted that the majority of studies examined, as well as the present one, used some type of inferential statistical analysis rather than descriptive statistics.

Finally, most of the writers cited in the literature review did establish at least a degree of relationship between number of absences and grades received. In these cases, the writers sometimes offered possible strategies to improve attendance patterns. When such information appeared, it was noted.

Conclusion

The major conclusion derived from the results was that the research hypothesis was valid. In the present study, the research hypothesis was that "an MCC composition student who is absent from class one to three times will receive a final semester percentage grade that is significantly higher than a student who misses from four to

seven classes." This hypothesis was verified, and the analysis of the data permitted the null hypothesis to be rejected. Thus, it was concluded that there was a significant difference in the arithmetic means of the two samples being studied (those who missed from one to three times and those who missed four to seven times). In short, there was a marked difference in the means, and the significance of the difference was established through the z test.

Implications

A number of implications became apparent upon careful consideration of the one major conclusion. First, while the z test does not establish a cause - effect relationship, it could be argued that the strength of the z value in this research at least implicates student attendance patterns in English composition classes with final percentage grade outcomes. As discussed in the review of literature, other writers of statistical studies also noted the probability that excessive absences do have a negative impact upon grades.

Thus, a second implication growing out of the first was the need to inform students in English composition classes at MCC of the results of the study. In particular, they needed to be aware that there was a significant difference in the final percentage grade means of the two groups which were studied. Hence, one way to improve the student's final grade would be for that student to be in

class regularly, not miss any classes (if possible), or at least not miss more than three.

Knowledge of the study's outcome also had implications for the Divisional Head of Arts and Sciences (who was also an English instructor) and other English instructional staff at MCC. As mentioned, instructional staff could proceed by informing students of the findings. In so doing, the staff would be using the study as an empirical basis of support for whatever attendance policy guidelines they had at the time of the study or wished to develop as a result of the study.

Finally, the major conclusion derived in this study should be of interest to other researchers conducting inquiry in similar problems. This is especially true since the literature dealing with absenteeism - grade relationships at the two-year college level is by no means abundant.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made as a direct result of this practicum:

1. It is recommended that after the Divisional Head of Arts and Sciences reviews the study, he distribute copies to other English instructional staff for review and discussion within the department.
2. It is recommended that English faculty make students aware of the findings of this study.

While the statistical test would not be comprehensible to most of the students, the arithmetic means of the two groups under study would. Therefore, the students should know that the arithmetic mean for the sample of students who missed from four to seven times was 77.61 percent, and the arithmetic mean for the sample of students who missed from one to three times was 83.56 percent.

3. Furthermore, the students need to be aware that attendance policies developed and implemented by English faculty have the empirical findings of this practicum as a basis.

4. It is also recommended that English department faculty members continue to develop and refine attendance policies which will encourage students to be present for as many classes as possible, and not to "cut" more than three per semester. Suggested policy and procedure development could include but not be limited to:

   a. continued use of reducing grades (as long as it remains legal) for absences (cuts) in excess of three;

   b. continued use of counseling services;

   c. continued practice of taking regular attendance; and

   d. exploration of the concept of matching

teaching styles with learning needs.

5. Finally, it is recommended that similar studies be conducted at other two-year and four-year post-secondary institutions. This is especially significant because it is, in part, related to larger concerns of student attrition and retention. A second reason why additional research needs to be done is that much of the literature in this area is dated. Only a few studies have been done recently.

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